



Opequon Creek Project Team

Newsletter

Winter 2007-2008



OCPT Volunteers after the creek cleanup September 29, 2007

Make a Note!

Until further notice, the Team's regular monthly meetings will be on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH** at James Rumsey on Rt.9, from 6-8PM. Our next meeting will be on February 6. If you can't make our meeting, remember that all of our meeting notes are posted on the OCPT website at www.opequoncreek.org.

Upcoming Events and Projects:

- March 1, 2008 – Baltimore and Randolph Street rain garden project design complete
- March 5, 2008 – OCPT Meeting
- March 26-28, 2008—ECRR “Hope and Hard Work,” Canaan Valley Resort
- April 2, 2008 – OCPT Meeting
- April 5, 2008 – OCPT Rain Barrel Workshop and Alice Ferguson Cleanup
- April 5 – April 12, 2008 – WV Make It Shine Campaign
- April 12, 2008—OCPT Spring Cleanup
- April 17, 2008 – War Memorial Park Tree Plant
- April 17-18, 2008 – Eastern Panhandle Conservation District Tree Sale
- April 19 and 26, 2008 – Mill Creek Buffer Planting
- April 22, 2008 – Earth Day

The First OCPT Newsletter

This is OCPT's first newsletter and we hope you find it helpful in keeping you informed on what the Team has been doing, what we are planning, and up coming events. We believe it is important to keep our members and friends current on the Team's projects and activities. We plan to issue this newsletter via email every quarter. Thank you for your interest in the Opequon watershed and please forward this along to anyone you believe shares our interest in improving the quality of the watershed for the enjoyment of all.

Contact Us:

P.O. Box 4248
Martinsburg, WV 25402
administrator@opequoncreek.org

OCPT is a West Virginia, citizen based, non-profit group dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Opequon watershed. The watershed needs your help. If we act now we can reduce the contamination entering the creek and preserve the Opequon for our enjoyment and that of future generations. Your interest and participation in the OCPT can make all the difference! Contact us or visit our website at opequoncreek.org to learn more about our projects and how you can help.

A Look Back

Before looking ahead to 2008, it's good to remember the Team's many accomplishments last year.

1. Planted 110 trees and shrubs to complete a riparian buffer along the Opequon.
2. Cleaned up a stretch of the Opequon which resulted in the removal of 52 tires, a number of large trash items, and 28 bags of smaller trash, an estimated 2.4 tons of garbage.
3. On-going fecal coliform monitoring at 14 sites in the watershed.
4. Completed an assessment of Mill Creek to assist in preparation of a Watershed Based Plan for cleaning up Mill Creek.
5. Took 49 bags of trash out of Mill Creek.
6. Sponsored three rain barrel workshops and sold 53 barrels with adapter kits.
7. OCPT incorporated with the State of West Virginia
8. First election of officers and Board of Directors
9. Received 501(c)(3) non-profit certification from the IRS.
10. Set up our website at www.opequoncreek.org
11. OCPT received an award for urban works in WV.
12. Received two grants for watershed projects.



Buffer planting along the Opequon

A Look Forward

Winter is the season the Team plans for spring and summer activities. Spring is always a busy time for projects that involve planting and this year we have two major projects coming up in April and May.

Rain gardens are a great way to reduce storm water runoff from urban areas and the Team has received a grant to install a demonstration rain garden in Martinsburg close to the Kilmer Springs Water Treatment Plant on Randolph and Baltimore streets. This project will be similar to the rain garden the Team constructed in a corner of the new county Judicial Center in 2006. The new rain garden will be even larger than the one at the Judicial Center and once again we are counting on a partnership with the Berkeley County Master Gardeners to help with the planting. If you haven't had a chance to see the Judicial Center rain garden stop by in the Spring and see the garden in bloom, it has earned lots of well deserved praise!

Our other spring project is the planting of a riparian buffer along Mill Creek. Buffers are one of the most effective ways to control nutrient leaching into the creek and to provide shade to keep water temperatures cool. We are planning to plant 147 native trees and shrubs along this stretch of Mill Creek. Mark April 19 and 26 on your calendars to help with the planting of this buffer.

The Team will also be sponsoring creek clean ups, rain barrel workshops, supporting a PHLOW project with the youth group of a local church, continuing our monitoring projects and getting the word out on the importance of water quality in the watershed with our outreach initiatives.

As you can see there will be lots of projects and activities coming up that you can participate in. A 'for fun' kayak/canoe trip and picnic along the Opequon is also in the works. Dates, times and places will be sent to all prior to each event so you can plan to attend.

Membership Dues and Donations

Now that OCPT is registered with the IRS as a non-profit, all dues and donations are tax deductible! Yes, projects such as riparian buffers and rain gardens are funded by grants, but there are requirements attached to these grants for matching funds. Most of this match is met by counting the monetary value of the volunteer labor (that's you!) which goes into completing the project. Often grant requirements specify that we have a dues paying membership.

Yearly dues are just \$10.00. Any additional donations are certainly needed and appreciated. As you know OCPT is a local citizen volunteer group with no paid staff. We do, however, have recurring operating expenses that are not covered by any grants. We hope you will consider a donation to help us cover these costs. Checks can be made out to OCPT and mailed to OCPT, P.O. Box 4248, Martinsburg, WV 25402 or given to our treasurer at any of our monthly meetings.

Mill Creek Assessment

One of our major projects last year was to complete an assessment of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Opequon. Our heartfelt thanks to Sandra Bernardi and Mary Palmer, who walked the entire length of Mill Creek documenting and photographing problem areas for the assessment. All the information they collected is now with our WV/DEP Potomac Basin Coordinator, Alana Hartman, who will write a Watershed Based Plan (WBP) for Mill Creek.



Scenic site on Mill Creek

Want to Become a Member?

You can help by lending your time, talents, and/or local contacts. To get involved and to become a steward of the Opequon, please join us at the monthly meeting held on the first Wednesday of every month or contact us by email at administrator@opequoncreek.org.

The WBP will be submitted to DEP who will use it as the baseline document to request federal funding for water quality projects along Mill Creek. This process takes time but we have made a beginning. The pollution issues affecting the Opequon and its tributaries were decades in the making. It cannot be reversed and water quality restored without a thorough understanding of where the non-point contamination is coming from. There are 12 other impaired tributaries feeding into the Opequon, each will require an assessment like Mill Creek. If you would like to participate in a future assessment or monitoring program please contact Alana.